

I have just learned that all but Alternative E of the Andrews/Steens RMA have requirements that prohibit recreational pack and saddle stock grazing in the Wilderness of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (Steens Mountain Area). I must ask your pardon if this “off the top of my head” response is not as literate and/or as well written as it should be as I work through the shock, frustration, and feeling of being let down by the agency by this proposed regulation.

Let me say the proposal to prohibit recreational stock grazing is an example of an unnecessary and unwarranted regulation on a legitimate, historical, and current wilderness dependant activity. It can only be looked at as being developed from sources with no idea whatsoever about the potential impacts of stock use, or worse, an intentional effort to ultimately remove recreational stock use from the Wilderness.

This proposal ignores all the following.

It ignores congressional intent when the Act creating the Steens Mountain Area was drafted.

It ignores the most recent interpretation of recreation stock grazing in the Steens Mountain Area by the Congressman that drafted the legislation creating it. It also ignores our request to add the letter indicating that interpretation as an addendum to the Andrews/Steens RMP.

It ignores any need for data collection to first identify the need before implementing this very limiting regulation.

It ignores the data, research, and resulting management philosophy and practices in hundreds of other Wilderness areas on this very issue.

It ignores the additional impact created by not allowing grazing where it is appropriate. A further explanation of the additional impact created by this proposal is discussed further below.

It ignores the work, and the integrity of the input, provided by the Back Country Horsemen on this very issue. We received no warning, no request for further discussion or input on this issue, after previously providing legitimate and factual information. So much for the “cooperation” in the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act.

The proposal takes away the horseman’s opportunity to reduce the impact of his animals when natural feed is available. Such a regulation will increase the impact of recreational stock use, likely to unacceptable levels in some areas, in the following ways.

1. It takes additional stock, or additional trips, to pack feed. Such increased activity creates additional impact on camp areas and trails. For instance, it is not uncommon for up 1000 pounds of feed to be packed into a single large hunting camp, requiring at least five additional animals.

2. Longer tethering periods and the activity of feeding in the tether areas creates additional impact. The more stock is confined and concentrated the more impact will result.

3. The regulation is unenforceable when visitors don’t understand and agree with the regulation, and when adequate feed is available that can be utilized with no adverse environmental affect. It can be surprising how often a couple horses get loose at night, and when caught a couple more get loose.

4. Funding for educational efforts to help horsemen in their effort to reduce the impact of their use gets drained off to pay for litigation costs in addressing such unnecessary and unwarranted regulations.

Because of time limitations I will stop at this point. I hope I have at least touched on the pertinent points, although there is much still unsaid on this issue.

/s/

Dan Applebaker
Back Country Horsemen of Oregon

Albert Teeman, Tribal Council Chair

For SMAC, 5- 8- 03, public comments

I am here today to first express the Tribal Councils appreciation of the hard work of the SMAC members over the last year and a half. Your willingness to spend several days away from home every month to take on the task of discussion and debate concerning the management of the Steens Mountains has been a valuable key in the creation of a management plan that respects all needs. The information brought forward in the meetings minutes have allowed the Tribes' staff to see and understand the issues and viewpoints of other groups and cultures: a valuable asset for the Tribal staff, both now with the Steen' s Andrews project, but with future projects as well. We honor and respect the work you have done so far, and look forward to seeing the results of the work you have scheduled in the future.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the hard work, communication, and integrity of the Burns BLM staff. Their work has consistently been of the highest caliber. Every concern, every request, every frustration has been immediately addressed, suggestions offered, and the concern resolved. We look forward to the continued working relationship of open, honest, and fruitful communication concerning this and all other projects in the future.

As for the draft Steen' s Andrews Resource Area Management Plan. Tribal staff are currently reviewing the draft for a variety of potential concerns, including:

- Potential long term impacts of each alternative,
- Potential affects of each alternative on traditional needs and uses of the Tribe,
- Any issues that we may not have initially realized, but could still be remedied at this stage, and
- That concerns addressed by the SMAC team are being addressed within the draft document to our satisfaction.

Any concerns realized within the review of the draft that should be brought to the attention of the SMAC for discussion and comment will be delivered at the next SMAC meeting.

As everyone will be reviewing this draft document, and since it has been nearly a year since staff members delivered to the SMAC an overview of Tribal concerns, now would be the best time to reiterate those concerns.

We as a people have a rich history in both the Steen' s and Andrews areas. People tell stories related to a variety of topics, including friendly contact with other Tribes, battles with the US Army and other Tribes, travel throughout the aboriginal area, and trade relations.

The Steens area in particular is of great cultural concern to the Burns Paiute Tribe. It is located well within the traditional or aboriginal use area of the Northern Paiutes and immediately adjacent to the former Malheur Indian Reservation.

The preservation of the archaeological remains of the Paiute' s own history is of vital concern to the Tribe today. We have a high interest in the location and documentation of archaeological sites, as well as site preservation, monitoring, and protection from looters and vandalism. The tribe itself would still like to see a Memorandum of Agreement to either contract with the BLM the Section 106 process for this area, or by agreement employ trained tribal members on each survey and documentation crew. This would also extend to our concerns about the change in stewardship to Wilderness increasing the level of awareness of the area, and the high potential of increased looting and vandalism of archaeological sites in and around the Steens Wilderness.

It is important to remember that the Burns Paiute interest in this area is by no means centered upon the archaeological record and the protection of archaeological and heritage properties. The totality of the traditional cultural practices and the significance of this area has never waned or ceased for the Tribe. “ Cultural Resources” or “ Heritage Resources” to the Burns Paiute Tribe has never been for old remains in an archaeological site, but is rather an

unbroken continuum that fully encompasses today as yesterday, and fully extends into tomorrow.

Native plant gathering is still a common activity for Tribal members. Elders state that while fishing, hunting, gathering, and spiritual activities were common in earlier times in the Steens area, the lack of access to those traditional areas as enforced by the settlers, discouraged and often times totally stopped the extensive historic activities by the Tribe. In the review of the draft management plan, we will be checking to verify that this problem has been redressed.

Noxious weed abatement seems to be an ongoing concern on all stewarded lands, and is also a concern for Tribal members. The Tribe does recognize that with the encroachment of non- native species, the plants vital to them are being overtaken. The spraying of noxious weeds, as well as other noxious weed abatement and non- native species abatement methods, need to be carefully coordinated with the Tribe to avoid important cultural plant sites being destroyed and/or impacted, especially immediately prior to and during harvest times. In the review of the draft management plan, we will be checking to verify that this communication concern has been addressed.

Road access in this area is still seen as an issue of importance to Tribal members. Whether the issue is continuation of lifeways, education, hunting, fishing, plant gathering, or ‘ recreation’ , the Paiute tribe is concerned with continued access to areas of Traditional practices. A major concern is the ability to transport the less mobile of the elders. While many issues such as access are seen to be addressed by an ‘ implied’ right to access, the Tribe feels that these rights must be written into the documentation: ‘ implied’ does not safeguard the Tribe in the future. In the review of the draft management plan, we will be checking to verify that this concern has been addressed. We will also be looking at other potential alternatives to a permitting system under the “ historic practices” language within the Steens Mountain legislation that will retain legal access for the Tribe without requiring a formal process.

Several issues may or may not have lent themselves to inclusion within the management plan, but should be addressed in writing and in conjunction with the final plan, including:

- the Paiute tribe' s close involvement in the education of and information disbursal to the public at large concerning heritage and cultural issues
- the Paiute tribe' s close involvement in the education of and information disbursal to the public at large concerning anything Paiute: culture, history, etc.
- use of Paiute translated to English on Signage within the resource areas

We will also be looking at other potential alternatives to inclusion of these issues if, in fact, they are not appropriate for inclusion in the document.

Again, we thank the SMAC and the Burns BLM for their good work.